



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

ENERGY EFFICIENCY & RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

EERMC FULL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, April 20, 2023

Full Council Meeting | 3:00 - 5:00 PM

Department of Administration Conference Room 2A, Providence, RI 02908 with remote participation via Zoom

Members in Attendance: Harry Oakley, Sue AnderBois, Kurt Teichert, Bob Izzo, Joe Garlick, Tom Magliochetti, Kate Grant, Brett Feldman, Chris Kearns

Others in Attendance: Sam Ross, Craig Johnson, Ben Smith, Chris Hunter, Rachel Sholly, Adrian Caesar, Michael O'Brien Crayne, Toby Ast, Karen Bradbury, Steve Chybowski, William Owen, Jake Curran, Greg, Caggiano, Daniel Tukey (virtual), Spencer Lawrence (virtual), Nelson DiBiase (virtual), Kathryne Cleary (virtual), Jeremy Newberger (virtual), Karen Verrengia (virtual)

1. Call to Order

Chairperson Oakley called the meeting to order at 3:06 p.m.

2. Chair Report

Chairperson Oakley delivered the Chair Report, noting that the Council will continue to review the bylaws and that the latest version is available online. He also noted that the Council's budget planning process for 2024 will start in May.

3. Executive Director Report

Acting Commissioner Kearns delivered the Executive Director report, providing an update on the Home Show and Energy Expo, OER's priorities for the 2024 Energy Efficiency plan, and the current status of the Governor's proposal regarding the 3rd party efficiency administrator.

Ms. Bradbury from the Office of Energy Resources (OER) then provided a federal funding update including Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act opportunities. OER is still waiting on additional program guidance and has set up a page for sharing funding information at energy.ri.gov/federalfunding.

4. Meeting Minutes – March 16, 2023

Chairperson Oakley motioned to approve the March 16, 2023 Meeting Minutes. Council Member AnderBois seconded. All in favor, none opposed.

5. Council Business (40 Min, 3:05 – 3:45 p.m.)

- a. *Discussion of Branding and Communications Initiative (15 min, 3:05 – 3:20 p.m.)*
Ms. Sholly, along with Mr. Hunter and Mr. Smith facilitated a discussion between the Council and Advocacy Solutions (AS) to share ideas and considerations for the branding and communications initiative. They presented an overview of AS's initial assessment of the EERMC's visibility both with the public and the business community, potential avenues for improvement, and initial steps toward developing a communications plan. The Council discussed potential concept targets of the branding and communications rework, the unique position of RI's entities and opportunities to engage in partnerships and formulating an informational resource hub.
- b. *Council Updates on Education Initiatives (15 min, 3:20 – 3:35 p.m.)*
Ms. Sholly led a presentation of the Education Committee's efforts including the results of the Home Show and Energy Expo supported by the EERMC, Rhode Island Energy (RIE) had approximately 250 people sign up for energy audits. She also shared that the EERMC's energy videos are posted on the website and Council Members noted that the videos can help communities currently engaging in community aggregation. Ms. Sholly also described the energy training for K-12 educators program results from GBRI, the previous public events forum event and recording which is posted to the EERMC website, and that planning is underway for the next public forum with URI focusing on energy equity challenges.
- c. *Presentation of the First Draft of the EERMC 2023 Annual Report and Policy Recommendations Discussion (10 min, 3:35 – 3:45 p.m.)*
Ms. Sholly of the consultant team presented an update on the 2023 Annual Report and solicited feedback on the policy recommendations being put forward. She noted that the Council will likely vote to finalize the report in May. The Council noted that they can leverage the report for understanding the communication capacity of the Council and the potential to further the discussion at the LEAD session on May 1.

6. Program Oversight (70 Min, 3:45 – 4:55 p.m.)

- a. *Market Potential Study Data Refresh Update and Vote on Targets for 2024-2026 Three-Year Period (25 min, 3:45 – 4:10 p.m.)*
The Council's consultant team shared the results of the market potential study data refresh and led a discussion on the targets for the three-year planning period. Mr. Ross provided background information on the targets set for the previous three-year plan. Mr. Caesar presented the changes in the updated study results.

Council Member Teichert motioned to approve the targets for the 2024-2026 three-year period as presented by the Council's consultant team on April 20, 2023, and to direct the EERMC's consultant team and legal counsel to coordinate to file the targets with the Public Utilities Commission. Council Member AnderBois seconded. All in favor, none opposed.

- b. *Rhode Island Energy Presentation of the Energy Efficiency Plan Memo (20 minutes, 4:10 – 4:30 p.m.)*

Mr. Ast from RIE presented the RIE three-year planning memo including the plan timeline and the intent of the company to submit the three-year and annual plans jointly. Mr. Ast noted the potential changes to the filing and the timeline due to proposed updates in the least cost procurement (LCP) standards. He also described the broad customer-centric approach of the programs with a strong focus on equity, the proposed strategies in the memo, the ability to leverage market research, and how to close the awareness gap of the programs.

The Company is focusing on the need to address program access for renters and how lessons and plans from other states can help, along with leveraging the reach of local community groups and organizations. Council Members discussed the place for climate change and emissions mitigation in the planning process and how to ensure responsible and effective implementation. Mr. Chybowski noted that OER has provided its priority recommendations to the 2024 EE plan and that they are available on the Council website.

- c. *Overview and Discussion of Proposed Updates to the Least Cost Procurement Standards (25 min, 4:30–4:55 p.m.)*

Mr. Johnson presented the proposed updates to the LCP standards by the PUC. These updates include the addition of a chapter on demand side management, requirements for greenhouse gas emissions accounting, and regional sensitivity analysis. Further discussion of proposed LCP updates will be added to the May 1st LEAD session discussion agenda.

7. Public Comment

Mr. Chybowski introduced Jake Curran, the 2023 Farm Energy fellow to the Council. He is currently a student at URI.

8. Adjournment

Chairperson Oakley motioned to adjourn the meeting at 5:11 p.m. Council Member AnderBois seconded. All in favor, none opposed.